

**New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees
December Meeting Board Minutes
Tuesday, December 19, 2022
11:00 a.m.: Executive Session
11:15 a.m.: Board Meeting**

**New Dawn Charter High School
242 Hoyt Street
Brooklyn, NY 11217**

**New Dawn Charter High School II
89-25 161st Street
Jamaica, NY 11432**

Tel: 347-505-9101

Board Members present: Mr. Ronald Tabano, Chairperson, Ms. Jane Sun, Vice Chair, Mr. Brian Baer, Secretary

Board Members Absent: Jonathon Carrington, Member, Ms. Katharine Urbati, Treasurer

Staff Members/ Visitors Present: Dr. Sara Asmussen, Executive Director, Ms. Donna Lobato, Principal Brooklyn, Mr. Zach Flory, Principal Queens, Dr. Lisa DiGaudio, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Mr. Jose Obregon, Director of Operations, Mr. Steve Ramkissoon, Director of HR and Finance, Ms. Nazli Askin, Director of Student Support Services, Ms. Emily Predmore, Data Specialist

I. Executive Session

Legal issues were discussed.

II. Resolution: December 2022 Board Agenda

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the December 2022 agenda.

Motion: Ms. Jane Sun motioned to accept and approve the December 2022, Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the December 2022 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

III. Resolution: November 2022 Board Minutes

Mr. Tabano asked if there was a motion to accept and approve the November 2022 board minutes.

Motion: Ms. Jane Sun motioned to accept and approve the November 2022 Board of Trustees meeting minutes.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the November 2022 Board of Trustees meeting minutes.

IV. Financials—Mr. Steve Ramkissoon
Benchmark 4: Financial Condition
Benchmark 5: Financial Management

a. Resolution: Monthly Financials

Brooklyn is currently standing at negative 286K. However, embedded in the monthly financial report is depreciation and amortization net income of 338K, which is not part of the school cash flow budget, but actually gives the school a positive income for the month. Mr. Ramkissoon asked if there were any questions regarding the Brooklyn School budget. There were no questions. Mr. Ramkissoon reported that the Queens school has a positive income of \$113K with a depreciation total of \$30K. This results in a positive income for the Queens school. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that after the month of December 2022, he will be able to give the board a six-month report and how he projects the schools will fair the remaining of the fiscal year. Mr. Ramkissoon reiterated that student enrollment and recruiting has a direct impact on each school's revenue. Mr. Ramkissoon asked if there re any questions regarding the Queens' school financial report. There were no questions.

Mr. Tabano the asked the board members if there was a motion to accept the November 2022 financials.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the November 2022 monthly financials.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the October 2022 monthly financials.

V. Hiring, Recruitment, and School Updates

Benchmark 1: Student Performance
Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Student & Family Engagement
Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance
Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

a. Dashboard & Comparison Data—Dr. Sara Asmussen

Dr. Asmussen confirmed Mr. Ramkissoon's statement regarding student enrollment and student recruitment having a direct impact on revenue. Dr. Asmussen then reported to the board that she conducted a comparison between NDCHS and other transfer schools. She informed the board that she made the comparison from school year 17-18 through school year 2021. She discovered

that all schools are doing fairly the same. Dr. Asmussen also reported that NDCHS along with Wildcat Academy were the only schools that administered the Regents exams last June and all other schools opted to grant waivers. Dr. Asmussen also stated that while NDCHS could have achieved better results with Regents scores, the schools still did well despite the pandemic. Both schools are focused on attendance for the next semester.

There are strategies in place to improve Regents results and attendance. Dr. Asmussen stated that everything that will be done for the rest of the year is going to be focused on consistent behaviors between the schools and engaging students through those consistent behaviors. In other words, she asked, what do we want to see in the classrooms? What do we want to see in the hallways? What don't we want to see staff do? How do we want staff to do it? Dr. Asmussen also stated that these behaviors will be codified through the PLCs. Dr. Asmussen further stated that Mr. Mike Di Fide will be supervising the mentoring program at both schools with the goal of trying to get students to start attending school regularly and consistently.

Mr. Tabano stated to the board that this poor student attendance is one of the repercussions of the pandemic that all schools are still trying to recover from. Mr. Tabano also mentioned that all schools across NYC are reporting 30% long-term absences. Therefore, this problem is not a unique NDCHS problem. However, it is a problem that must be addressed.

b. Mentoring Program—Mr. Michael Di Fede

Mr. Di Fide introduced himself to the board members and described the mentoring program at NDCHS. He stated that each staff member receives a group of students that each staff member is responsible to contact each week. Every Monday from 4 P.M. to 5 P.M. staff is given time to reach out to their mentees or their mentees' guardians to discuss student progress including attendance, grades, and other issues that may be prevalent during the school day or school year. The mentoring program also is designed to build an improved student-teacher relationship, build an improved guardian-teacher relationship, and to make parents allies in order to create an outlet for students to self-advocate. The mentoring program also increases communication among the staff, teachers, counselors, and administrators about student progress. It is also designed to increase student engagement at school. Mr. Di Fide described different scenarios on how a mentor can interact with a student to help the student engage and continue to succeed in school. One of the examples that Mr. Di Fide provided was a mentor dealing with a student who is undergoing a family hardship. In such a case, the mentor is responsible for getting proper counseling support for that student while using the appropriate level of confidentiality. The mentor will also alert teachers to be patient with the student. Therefore, mentoring not only involves self-advocating for students, but also calls for mentors to make sure that students get the right support that they need during difficult times that they may be experiencing. Mr. Di Fide asked the board members if they had any questions. There were no questions and Mr. Tabano wished Mr. Di Fide well.

c. Staff Hiring—Mr. Steve Ramkissoon

Mr. Ramkissoon reported to the board that the staff recruitment committee meets every other week. Recently, there was a career fair hosted at the Brooklyn school. Unfortunately, that event

was not as successful as those conducted previously. Mr. Ramkissoon stated that he believes that the sparse showing can be attributed to the proximity of the holidays and the end of year. However, before the end of year, NDCHS will host another career fair. Mr. Ramkissoon confirmed that for 2023, the schools have renewed all job postings on Indeed. The focus will be to recruit certified SPED teachers.

Dr. Lisa DiGaudio also stated that Urban Dove and Wildcat Academy will be participating with NDCHS at the next career fair at the Brooklyn school.

d. Student Recruitment—Dr. Lisa DiGaudio

Dr. DiGaudio informed the board that she has conducted a few inquiries on different methods to advertise. Dr. DiGaudio stated that many of the online student recruiting platforms are not very lucrative. Additionally, these student recruiting platforms charge a considerable amount of money. Therefore, another student recruiting venue will have to be considered. Certainly, advertising in public buses is still an option that will get the school immediate visibility in the field. Dr. DiGaudio also mentioned that the recruiting committee has conducted a huge campaign among all the schools throughout Brooklyn and Queens for both NDCS campuses. The goal is to set up school visits and to reach out directly to the community. So far, there has been good feedback resulting in a student enrollment uptick for the Queens school.

e. School Updates—Donna Lobato/Zach Flory

Mr. Flory reported to the board that, currently, the Queens school has 248 students enrolled. Since the last report to the board, there were twelve (12) new student admissions and five (5) discharges. Unfortunately, there are still several more students that are pending discharge. Mr. Flory expects to continue to increase student enrollment despite the potential losses. Mr. Flory reported to the board that Regent Chin visited the Queens school recently. Mr. Flory stated that it was a positive experience. Regent Chin met with a panel of students to speak about graduation measures. The conversation was two way and she was very happy to speak with them and hear their thoughts on how they are assessed as students. They spoke about the Regents exams and they spoke about the positives and negatives of the Regents exams. This was a good opportunity for students to be heard. Mr. Flory stated that students are willing to be assessed, but they want it to be done fairly. Regent Chin also had the opportunity to observe classes as well. After the observations, there was a good follow up meeting including Regents Chin, Dr. Asmussen, Ms. Lobato, Mr. Flory, and Dr. DiGaudio.

Ms. Lobato confirmed that the meeting with Regent Chin was productive and there was much positive feedback provided in both directions. A discussion was then held about the direction the Regent's committee was headed in terms of overhauling the Regents Exams.

Ms. Lobato reported that for the Brooklyn school that there are two hundred fifty students (250) enrolled. There were six (6) new enrollments and no discharges since the last board meeting. Notwithstanding, there are a few students that will be discharged soon. Finally, Ms. Lobato stated that there is a SPED teacher demo scheduled for tomorrow.

f. Internship & Culinary—Ms. Nazli Askin

Ms. Askin reported to the board that the internship program is going well in both schools. Students are once again getting used to going to their internship sites and reporting back to the school. There are two (2) new partnerships that seem promising. One of these partnerships is in Brooklyn with New York Edge. New York Edge is a huge nonprofit organization and works with younger students in after school programs. Subsequently, NDCHS students are going to be working with them. The students will be paid and paid well at \$17 an hour. There is another site at PS 15 in Queens They are also looking for after school counselors, and they are willing to take in as many kids as needed. Regarding the culinary program, Ms. Askin stated that NDCHS is still working on its CTE application. It is a long process. The schools' culinary chefs are working on ordering supplies and working on a syllabus and curriculum with Dr. DiGaudio. The program will start next semester. In January 2023, the schools will send out an application to the students for participation in the program. The plan is to conduct interviews with students and then begin the program.

VI. Facilities—Jose Obregon

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

Mr. Obregon informed Mr. Tabano that he had followed up with Mr. Scott Barone from Barone Management about the caging requirement to prevent students from accessing the roof area. Mr. Barone was emailed about the outstanding project and the importance of getting it done as soon as possible. To date, there is no response from Barone management on this issue.

Mr. Tabano asked Mr. Brian Baer if he knew where the school was regarding the rooftop project. Mr. Baer stated that he believes that Barone's schedule for work on the roof at the Queens school is aggressive and unrealistic. Mr. Tabano then asked Dr. Asmussen when the school was with meeting with Barone management. Dr. Asmussen confirmed that it will happen after the holidays. Mr. Tabano also stated that he reached out to GKV Architects in reference to monies that they owe the Fire Alarm company that did the installation at the Brooklyn school but he has not heard back from them. Mr. Tabano indicated that he would reach out to GKV Architects one more time. Mr. Brian Baer stated that he would reach out to GKV as well.

Mr. Obregon suggested to the board that Mr. Brian Baer come out and look at the roof at the Queens school to confirm and compare what Barone is depicting as their scope of work on the roof to make sure that all parties are in agreement. Mr. Brian Baer agreed to come out and look at the roof.

Mr. Obregon reported to the board that the water pump was finally fixed at the Queens school, but there remains a heating issue in the entire building. Individual heating units are not functioning as they should and the hallways are constantly cold.

Finally, Mr. Obregon stated that he has the kitchen equipment installers will be coming to the Brooklyn school to make sure that everyone is trained on the use and maintenance of the equipment.

VII. Grants & Reports—Sara Asmussen

Benchmark 1: Student Performance

Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Student & Family Engagement

Benchmark 8: Mission & Key Design Elements

a. Land Use Attorney

Dr. Asmussen stated that the land-use attorney believes that he can file successfully to get the open space on the rooftop to be used as a classroom. He has a positive and can-do attitude and the prospects of getting this done are good.

b. Queens Kitchen

Dr. Asmussen stated that she will re-schedule the walkthrough with Ilya the architect who will be designing the kitchen in Queens and Mr. Brian Baer in the second week of January 2023.

VIII. Policies and Procedures

a. NA

IX. New Business

There was no new business discussed.

X. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

XI. Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2023. The Board adjourned at 12:05 PM.